

in opposing any effort to curtail the existing rights and prerogatives of Senators to engage in full, robust, and extended debate as we consider legislation.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that this bipartisan letter, dated April 7, 2017, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

U.S. SENATE,
Washington, DC, April 7, 2017.

Hon. MITCH MCCONNELL,
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

Hon. CHARLES E. SCHUMER,
Democratic Leader, U.S. Senate,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MAJORITY LEADER MCCONNELL AND DEMOCRATIC LEADER SCHUMER: We are writing to urge you to support our efforts to preserve existing rules, practices, and traditions as they pertain to the right of Members to engage in extended debate on legislation before the United States Senate. Senators have expressed a variety of opinions about the appropriateness of limiting debate when we are considering judicial and executive branch nominations. Regardless of our past disagreements on that issue, we are united in our determination to preserve the ability of Members to engage in extended debate when bills are on the Senate floor.

We are mindful of the unique role the Senate plays in the legislative process, and we are steadfastly committed to ensuring that this great American institution continues to serve as the world's greatest deliberative body. Therefore, we are asking you to join us in opposing any effort to curtail the existing rights and prerogatives of Senators to engage in full, robust, and extended debate as we consider legislation before this body in the future.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Collins; Orrin Hatch; Claire McCaskill; Lisa Murkowski; Christopher A. Coons; Joe Manchin; John McCain; Patrick Leahy; Roger Wicker; Luther Strange; Angus King; Michael Bennet; Amy Klobuchar; Robert P. Casey, Jr.; Martin Heinrich.

John Boozman; Lindsey Graham; Richard Burr; Mark Warner; Jerry Moran; Roy Blunt; Marco Rubio; Jeanne Shaheen; Thom Tillis; Sherrod Brown; Shelley Moore Capito; Kirsten E. Gillibrand; Brian Schatz; Michael Enzi; Dean Heller.

Cory Booker; Mazie Hirono; Dianne Feinstein; John Thune; Bill Cassidy; Heidi Heitkamp; Jeff Flake; Chuck Grassley; Maria Cantwell; Rob Portman; Lamar Alexander; John Kennedy; Jon Tester; Tom Carper; Pat Roberts.

Maggie Hassan; Tammy Duckworth; Jack Reed; Thad Cochran; Joe Donnelly; Ben Sasse; Todd Young; Kamala Harris; Bill Nelson; Johnny Isakson; Ed Markey; Mike Lee; Debbie Stabenow; Sheldon Whitehouse; Robert Menendez; Tim Kaine.

Ms. COLLINS. The culture of the Senate is built upon a foundation of respect and cooperation that is meant to transcend partisanship. It is a culture in which legislative goals are reached with patience, persuasion, and perseverance, not raw power.

I implore my colleagues to consider the ramifications for our country. Do we want laws enacted one year to be repealed 2 years later on a simple majority vote and then perhaps reenacted in another 2 years by just 51 votes?

Do we want major laws, significant changes in policy, to be rammed through the Senate without thoughtful debate and bipartisan support?

At a time when our country is deeply and closely divided, do we really want to worsen the polarization by improving significant changes in public policy by a narrow partisan vote?

We are now on the brink of heading down that dangerous road, a slippery slope toward a tyranny of the majority. Limiting the ability of Senators to engage in a debate on legislative matters would give the majority party unprecedented power to push through major changes without careful deliberation or bipartisan cooperation. Such a move would have lasting implications, as future majorities—whether Republican or Democratic—would have little incentive to work with the other party.

It is crucial that we work together and find common ground on the issues that matter most to the American people. Changing longstanding Senate rules to benefit one political party would discourage efforts to forge consensus and only serve to reinforce bitter partisan divisions.

I urge my colleagues to stand against this calamitous change and for the principles of compromise and cooperation that have long defined and been the hallmarks of the U.S. Senate.

Let us listen to the admonition of the Democratic leader when he spoke against changing the rules in 2017: "Let us go no further down this road."

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT JOHN "BIG JOHN" QUINTRELL

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, today, I have the distinct honor of recognizing John "Big John" Quintrell of Helena, MT, for bravely serving our Nation during the Vietnam war and for his dedication to supporting the heroes who fought alongside him.

John served honorably in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969 with the Wolfhounds. I understand there are some Wolfhounds watching tonight. The Wolfhounds are the 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division. And he received honors, including the Bronze Star with Valor and the Purple Heart.

Upon returning home, John was met with hostility and was shamed for his sacrifice in Vietnam by his fellow Americans. For the next 35 years, John, like so many of our veterans, kept that pain to himself.

In 2004, John opened a box—a box filled with items that brought back

memories of Vietnam—and he was inspired to host a reunion for his fellow Vietnam veterans.

For the very first time in over 35 years, these men were reunited. John's reunion gave these often-forgotten heroes a sense of peace, a sense of acceptance, friendship, and healing. And following that successful reunion, John and the other Wolfhounds were on a mission to find others who served beside them.

And since 2004, John has connected with over 125 Wolfhounds, and many have attended 1 of the 9 reunions John planned. After hearing John's story, his children and grandchildren worked to keep these reunions going and the legacy alive.

John's support for his fellow Wolfhounds extends far beyond the reunions he planned. In 2018, John decided to document the stories of the Wolfhounds and their time in Vietnam. To date, John has conducted over 90—90—video interviews, and because of John's work, future generations will have the opportunity to hear their relatives' firsthand account of service in Vietnam.

John decided to share his own story by publishing a book entitled "My 365 Days With the Wolfhounds in Vietnam," and he did that in 2021.

John's honest account of his experience in the Vietnam war has given countless veterans and their family members a sense of understanding, as well as healing. After years of suppressing memories of his time in Vietnam, John now shares his story. He shares his story with others and encourages them to share their own experience and find their own path to healing.

A big thanks to John's passion, and because of his dedication in supporting his fellow veterans, many soldiers are once again proud of their sacrifice to our great Nation. You see, John epitomizes the heart of a Montana veteran, whose selfless service has reached far beyond the battlefield. So I want to thank John. I want to thank John for his service to our great country and for the kindness he has shown to the heroes who served alongside him.

John, keep up the great work because you make Montana proud, and you make America proud.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oklahoma.

VOTING RIGHTS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, this week, the Democrats are forcing yet another show vote on the so-called voting rights legislation. They claim the right to vote is under attack by the States, and there is nothing that could be further from the truth.

Ahead of the 2020 elections, everyone from Vice President KAMALA HARRIS to Eric Holder to Stacey Abrams claimed that they were experiencing a wave of voter suppression. Now, that is very significant—a wave of voter suppression, as if they have to do something to change our system.

And the facts are so clear on that. You know, people lie around here, but the facts don't lie. The Census Bureau reported that the turnout in last year's election was 66.8 percent. Now, that was the highest voter turnout of the 21st century, and that turnout was higher across all demographics, as well as including minorities.

More than 90 percent of Americans think it is easy to vote. More than a third of them think the rules should be more stringent than they are today, and there is a good argument for that. But that argument is prevailing right now.

So once you see that the Democrats' Big Lie of rampant voter suppression is clearly false, why are they pushing this election takeover bill? They want to nationalize elections, putting the Federal Government in charge of something that the Constitution clearly says belongs to the State.

And just a few examples of what the bill would do: It would line the pockets of candidates with taxpayer dollars in order to run for office. It would restrict commonsense voter ID, supported by over 75 percent of the Americans, and mandate mail-in ballots and allow ballot trafficking—trafficking, that is when the unsupervised political operatives collect and submit absentee ballots—and it would make election day a Federal holiday, costing somewhere close to \$1 billion each time that it would be used.

Now, you don't have to take my word for it on how radical this is. Oklahoma's election board secretary—keep in mind, as in most States, it is non-political, nonpartisan in any way, and the guy's name is Paul Zirriax. He has called SCHUMER's legislation a "recipe for chaos."

Democrats can feel the American people turning against their agenda. And so they are desperate to rig elections in their favor, and they will do so by whatever means necessary—even killing rules that make the Senate the Senate.

This would poison bipartisan compromise in the Senate forever. My Democratic colleagues want you to forget that they were for the filibuster before they were against it. Just 5 years ago, 33 Senate Democrats, including then-Senator HARRIS, penned a letter demanding that we defend and retain it forever. So they were demanding that we retain the filibuster. But now they changed their mind, which means that they either have amnesia or that they see an opportunity to force their radical agenda on the American families.

If Democrats get their way on the filibuster, they won't stop taking over our elections. They will also pass their Green New Deal, their abortion on demand, amnesty, and pack the Supreme Court with activists to uphold their unconstitutional agenda.

I want to close by sharing a comment on the filibuster. The quote is this:

Getting rid of the filibuster has long-term consequences. If there's one thing that I

have learned in my years here, once you change the rules and surrender the Senate's institutional power, you never get it back.

Now, I didn't say that. That was said by President Joe Biden. He said it just in those words, and that might be the first time that we agree on something.

Likewise, Senator SCHUMER also said that getting rid of the legislative filibuster would be "doomsday for democracy." And I happen to agree with him on that, too.

I have served the people of Oklahoma in the Senate longer than anyone in history, and I feel strongly that the one thing that has protected our democratic Republic and ensured bipartisanism more than any other single thing is the Senate's protection of the voice of the minority.

That is what we are famous for. There is no one else that has that as a function to do it, and yet I am seeing some of the things that are going on right now.

President Biden said—keep this in mind—back in 2005: We have got to keep the filibuster.

Then in 2021, just the other day, he said: We have got to kill the filibuster.

He said that yesterday.

Senator SCHUMER, back in 2005, said killing the filibuster will be "doomsday for democracy," and now SCHUMER wants to kill the filibuster.

Senator COONS said, back in 2018: "I am committed to never voting to change the legislative filibuster." And now he is supporting killing the filibuster.

Senator KLOBUCHAR, back in 2017, said: "Let's keep that 60-vote threshold in place," which is the filibuster.

And now she said, just a few days ago: "I would personally get rid of the filibuster."

So here is what we are faced with: We know what is right, and we know what is wrong. It is very clear. Yet they are desperately trying to take a position that they have had for a long period of time. So we will continue to protect it. Both the President and Senator SCHUMER are trying to kill the filibuster, and we are not going to let that happen.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Ms. LUMMIS. Mr. President, it is always an honor to address the people of the United States from the floor of the U.S. Senate, and tonight is no exception.

I want to thank my colleague from Oklahoma for his wonderful remarks.

In order to form a more perfect Union, our Founding Fathers gave us a government that filters the will of the majority through a deliberative process of amendment and debate. For centuries, this has meant that legislative change, while slower in the United States than in some other countries, is moderated through healthy compromises and informed by a greater number of voices. This, in turn, has tended to give us legislation that benefits more Americans.

In recent decades, one of the most important factors in this process has been the Senate filibuster. It is one of the defining characteristics that sets the Senate apart from the House, and I served in the House. I remember how frustrating it was to send bill after bill to the Senate only to watch those bills die.

But because the House is set up on a more partisan basis, some of the bills we sent over here were pretty partisan. So the Senate has a chance to either look at those and reject them as purely partisan or, more frequently, take up bills that have been crafted on a bipartisan basis in this body, and I respect that.

The House is about simple majority rule, but the Senate, thanks in part to the filibuster, is defined by the rights of the minority party. Simply put, it gives the party not in power a voice to speak for forgotten Americans and for small States like Wyoming.

I am continually amazed at the whip-lash-inducing about-face that Senate Democrats are doing on this issue. It was mentioned earlier by the previous speaker. Senate Democrats may be trying to end the filibuster today, but until recently, they sang a very different tune. As was pointed out, Majority Leader SCHUMER, in 2005, said that abolishing the filibuster would be doomsday for democracy—doomsday. Majority Whip DURBIN said in 2018 that ending the filibuster would be the end of the Senate as was originally devised and created going back to our Founding Fathers. Vice President HARRIS signed a letter in 2017, with 31 Democratic Senators, urging the protection of the filibuster. President Biden was also a big supporter of the filibuster, calling it a Senator's right to require 60 votes for legislation and claiming that efforts to undermine the filibuster are a "power grab" by the majority party.

Well, today President Biden and Senate Democrats are trying to do just that, grab power. They are trying to overhaul our voting system by nuking the filibuster and seizing unchecked power.

Some of their more levelheaded and forward-thinking colleagues really are hesitant to do that. To their great credit and to the benefit of the institution of the Senate, my colleagues KYRSTEN SINEMA and JOE MANCHIN recognize that what goes around comes around. Senator MANCHIN criticized the idea of a filibuster carve-out for election takeover legislation saying that "anytime there's a carve-out, you eat the whole turkey." There is nothing left.

Senator SINEMA wrote in the Washington Post that Democrats had more to lose than gain by changing filibuster rules, noting that the best way to achieve durable lasting results is through bipartisan cooperation.

You know, I agree. We saw earlier this year, the infrastructure bill was the product of bipartisan discussion,

and it produced legislation that had an overwhelming majority of the votes in the Senate. Now, I was not a “yes” vote on that bill. I was a “no” vote on that bill. I felt it spent too much money, but I will say this. It was a fine work product that was developed by people of good will in both parties. They accepted ideas that I had and that others of us had who eventually voted against the bill, and they worked tirelessly for months. They would not give up because they recognized that when you can get a significant majority in this Senate to support something on a bipartisan basis, you have a better product for the Nation.

And I will say, I am proud of their work. I compliment them as frequently as I can for that work product, even though I didn’t vote for it. It was an example of true bipartisanship, a true bipartisan compromise.

That is another reason that I have worked with my friend from Arizona Senator SINEMA and with my friend from Oregon RON WYDEN on financial innovation. I had never met RON WYDEN until that bill. That infrastructure bill came to the floor, and it had an amendment on the definition of broker that would apply in financial innovation instances. It did not adequately represent what really happens in the world of digital assets.

So Senator WYDEN and I met here on the floor. We became friends and started working on financial innovation issues, digital assets. And even though we were unsuccessful in changing the definition of “broker” in that bill, it forged a working friendship that I am confident will last for as long as I am here and as long as he is here together.

That is one of the reasons that I have come to believe so strongly in the filibuster. I saw it work in that specific piece of legislation, even in my first year in the U.S. Senate. It is why I have worked with SHELDON WHITEHOUSE from Rhode Island on a foreign agent registration reform. It is why I have worked with other Members of the other party on issues where we see more common ground than we see differences.

If you want lasting change, it requires broad bipartisan support. Otherwise, the next administration will work to overturn your actions.

The last time Democrats changed the filibuster, it ultimately led to three Supreme Court Justices picked by President Trump. If Democrats thought that was bad, they should think carefully before changing the filibuster for other legislation. We should all think long and hard, as we prepare to vote, over this radical proposal.

I implore my Democratic colleagues, consider when the Senate was in Republican hands and when President Trump wanted Republicans to end the filibuster. Republicans rejected the Republican President’s request to end the filibuster, and they did it out of respect for this institution. I am sure it was frustrating for the previous President.

In some ways, it was frustrating for people like me.

I was not in Washington during the 4 years of the Trump Presidency. I was here during the 8 years of the Obama Presidency, serving in the House. I was not here during the Trump Presidency. I was back in Wyoming. In that time, you know, we were characterized as being a big red State, where a bunch of people in a “basket of deplorables”—I was in there with them—were living and clinging to their guns and their Bibles and we were treated like outcasts in our own country and it felt antagonistic. It was part of what creates this great divide that this country is in right now. That is how we felt about ourselves.

I have to tell you, that is how we felt when President Biden went to Georgia and gave a speech and compared anyone who didn’t support election reform to people like George Wallace. He compared people in my State and me, quite frankly, to a bunch of racists. That rhetoric is so damaging to trying to heal this country.

We all know our Nation is divided right now. Yesterday didn’t help. If we want a more perfect Union than we have today, we need more compromise, not less. That is why we have institutional norms like the filibuster. When one party starts tearing up the norms, they might gain in the short term, but they do irreversible, lasting damage not only to our institutions but to our “e pluribus unum,” “out of many, one.” If we want to be one, we should keep the filibuster in place.

As those entrusted with the upkeep of our Constitution for future generations, we need to take a longer term view of what will be best for the country, not just our short-term political aspirations. Our Founders understood that the ends do not always justify the means. That is why we have the separation of powers—two Chambers of Congress and a Bill of Rights that protects the individuals, that protects freedom. Sometimes you have to choose the harder right over the easier wrong. Compromise is hard. I will tell you, I am not all that good at it. I am trying to learn from the people in this Senate Chamber who are so successful at it.

You know, the American people have placed a great deal of faith in each one of us to get this done. I have faith in us as well.

I will admit that I really disliked my first year in this U.S. Senate. It was a huge disappointment to me. It was ugly. It was nasty. It seemed un-American.

But I still have faith in us. We need to protect our institutions. One of those institutions is the filibuster. I think it will allow us to continue to be a nation that is out of many and yet is still one. God willing, that will be the case.

Thank you.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KELLY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. OSSOFF. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO RABBI MOSHE FELLER

Ms. KLOBUCHAR. Mr. President, I rise to recognize Rabbi Moshe Feller for the beautiful prayer he offered us this week. He could be considered a prolific guest chaplain—having led both Houses of Congress in prayer a combined 10 times over the last several decades. Each time, his wisdom, his faith in God, and his regard for the work of this body have all shined through. Today was no exception.

It was particularly special to know that he was joined by one of his sons, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Feller, as well as three of his grandchildren, Rabbi Tzemach Feller, Rabbi Yossi Feller, and Moussie Feller. I am confident that his other son, Rabbi Levi Feller, and his many other grandchildren were excitedly watching from home. And I know that if Mindelle, Rabbi Moshe Feller’s wife of 56 years who passed away in 2017, were still with us today, she too would be so proud.

I have had the honor of meeting Rabbi Feller many times over the years, and I am glad he was able to return to this Chamber today.

In addition to being the longest serving Rabbi in Minnesota, Rabbi Feller leads the Upper Midwest Merkos Chabad Lubavitch in St. Paul and is a member of the board of Merkos L’Inyonei Chinuch, the education arm of the International Chabad movement. Through his work, he mentors and inspires people of all faiths in Minnesota and across the country. A passionate and dedicated leader, he has been instrumental in cultivating Jewish life in Minnesota, and his numerous contributions have enriched our State as a whole.

Whether by overseeing the founding and establishment of over 30 Jewish institutions in the Midwest or by serving as a counselor and mentor to those seeking to grow closer to their faith, Rabbi Feller unwaveringly answers the call.

With his remarks this morning, Rabbi Feller offered a clarion reminder